

Appl. No. 09/736,717
Amdt. dated December 28, 2004
Reply to Office action of October 1, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants have received the Office action dated October 1, 2004, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1-7, 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Van Oorschot (U.S. Pat. No. 6,317,829) in view of Eastlake (*Internet Draft*, 1999, pp. 1-11); and 2) objected to claim 8 as being based on a rejected base claim, but otherwise allowable.

With this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1-3. Also, Applicants add claims 11-20. Based on the amendments and arguments contained herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

I. CLAIM AMENDMENTS UNRELATED TO PATENTABILITY

Various non-narrowing amendments have been made to the claims for reasons unrelated to patentability. For example, claims 1-3 previously used the language "step of." References to "steps" have been omitted to ensure that none of the limitations in the method claims are interpreted under the dictates of 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph.

II. § 103 REJECTIONS

Amended claim 1, in part, requires "a first cryptographic key [that] protects an integrity of secret information stored in a database and a second cryptographic key [that] protects access to the secret information stored in the database." None of the references cited by the Examiner, nor combinations of the references, teaches or suggests these limitations.

While Van Oorschot teaches an encryption public key and a decryption private key pair (see col. 4, lines 14-19), Van Oorschot does not teach or suggest "a first cryptographic key [that] protects an integrity of secret information stored in a database and a second cryptographic key [that] protects access to the secret information stored in the database" as required in claim 1. None of the references cited by the Examiner, nor combinations of the references, teaches or suggests these limitations. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 1 and all claims that depend from claim 1 are allowable.

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III. NEW CLAIMS

Claim 11 requires "a key repository configured to maintain a first key and a second key" and "a database coupled to the key repository and storing secret information, wherein the first key protects an integrity of the secret information stored in the database and the second key protects access to the secret information stored in the database." None of the references cited by the Examiner, nor combinations of the references, teaches or suggests these limitations.

As described previously, Van Oorschot teaches an encryption public key and a decryption private key pair (see col. 4, lines 14-19). However, Van Oorschot does not teach or suggest "a first key [that] protects an integrity of secret information stored in a database and a second cryptographic key [that] protects access to the secret information stored in the database" as required in claim 11. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 11 and all claims that depend from claim 11 are allowable.

The Examiner indicated that claim 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 21 includes the limitations of claim 8 without the amendments to claim 1 (i.e., claim 21 includes the limitations that the Examiner indicated as allowable). For at least this reason, Applicants submit that claim 21 is allowable.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

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Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Hewlett-Packard Development Company's Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Alan D. Christenson
PTO Reg. No. 54,036
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
AGENT FOR APPLICANTS

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
Legal Dept., M/S 35
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400